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29 July 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director (Administration)

SUBJECT: Delegation of Authority

 REFERENCE: Memo to DD/A from Acting AD/P dated 17 June 1952  
 with cover memo from Acting DD/A to Chief, O&MS  
 dated 25 June 1952

1. In his memorandum of 17 June the Acting Assistant Director, Personnel, states there are gaps in the authority delegated to him. After a review of existing delegations, we are of the opinion that he has the authority necessary to perform his functions with the exception of the authority to administer oaths of office. If he needs this authority, it must be obtained from the Director as a personal delegation to the AD/P by name in accordance with the rulings of the Comptroller General.

2. In the memorandum from the Acting Deputy Director (Administration) to the Chief, Organization and Methods Service, of 25 June a study of provisions of the delegation of authority is requested with certain specific points to be taken under consideration. This raises once more the troublesome and highly technical problem of delegation of authority in the Government structure. The basic paper in this connection is the memorandum of 1 December 1950 establishing over-all administrative authorities. This was the subject of intensive study at the time. It must be remembered that this paper is not an administrative paper as much as it is an audit paper. That is, it is designed to satisfy the General Accounting Office and other audit authorities that every administrative action approved in the Agency is approved by someone with technical authority to take the action. The problem of who is properly authorized is surrounded by many laws, regulations and Comptroller General's opinions which, in the aggregate, are highly restrictive, and the paper of 1 December 1950 was designed to comply with such restrictions in the simplest manner possible. In some cases subordinates must be named to be properly authorized. This does not deny the right of the supervisor to limit the exercise of authority by those subordinates through normal administrative control. Therefore, the administration of authority is quite different from the technical problem of delegation of authority.

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3. If the Acting Assistant Director, Personnel, or any other administrative officer is unable to accomplish his mission through lack of properly delegated authority, we will be glad to review the existing delegations and, if necessary, make a complete revision; but unless the present form of delegations in the memorandum of 1 December 1950 is hampering any office, we believe it should not be revised. We would be glad to consult at any time with anyone who has questions in this regard.



LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel

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